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MORS

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# How to Propose a MORS Special Meeting

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**A**re you working on an important topic that you think deserves greater emphasis in the national security analysis community? Are you willing to devote some time and energy to help organize an event on this special topic?

If your answers to these questions are, "yes," you may want to submit a proposal to MORS suggesting a special meeting to advance the community's awareness and capabilities in an important area.

Over the past 25 years, MORS has held more than 70 special meetings on topics ranging from the Department of Defense (DoD) Quadrennial Defense Review to military recruiting. For example, on page 9 of this issue you can find a description of a workshop MORS will conduct

## Examples of Past Special Meeting Justifications

- *Experimentation, October 2006:* Experimentation allows the military to explore new concepts and doctrine. This workshop will explore ways of increasing the analytical rigor used in the planning and conduct of experiments, thus increasing the efficiency of the experiment with a corresponding decrease in cost while helping to ensure that valid new concepts mature at a rapid rate into the force.
- *Affordability Analysis, October 2012:* "How much military capability can the US afford?" is an important question in these times of decreasing budgets. This workshop, with the robust participation of other societies and industry, will explore ways of making the tough tradeoffs needed to ensure our military dollars are well spent.
- *QDR, May 2013:* The QDR is an every four year strategic assessment of the military capabilities needed by the DoD to confront current and future challenges. Those attending this workshop will better understand the successes and limitations of previous QDRs, better appreciate the fiscal climate influencing the 2014 QDR, and be exposed to some new concepts that may be used to make this QDR better than its predecessors.

in October. The following paragraphs tell you how to submit a special meeting proposal to MORS. The process is simple; it involves preparing and submitting a two-to-three-page concept paper that contains the essential information needed by the MORS leadership to

approve the initial planning and preparation of the special meeting terms of reference (TOR) document.

## The Concept Paper Template

There are 12 sections in the concept paper template: (1) Purpose, (2) Type

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of Meeting, (3) Justification, (4) Other MORS Events/Groups, (5) Sponsor/Proponent Interest, (6) Meeting Description, (7) Prospective Chair, (8) Organizing Committee, (9) Location, (10) Proposed Dates, (11) Proposed Milestone Schedule, and (12) Concept Paper Point of Contact.

### **Purpose, Type of Meeting, and Justification**

The first three sections of the special meeting concept paper provide the initial “who, what, and why” of the proposed special meeting. In the purpose section, the submitter describes the topic and expected meeting outcomes, and identifies the population that may be interested in attending. The next section describes the type of meeting proposed. There are four types of MORS special meetings:

- A mini-symposium focuses on timely exchange of important state-of-the-art information within a subfield or a particular application area of national security analysis. It raises awareness of the status of analysis in the topic area, including the research being conducted to advance the topic, with little or no effort to evaluate or suggest solutions. It often consists of large plenary sessions with limited, or no opportunities to meet in subgroups. The mini-symposium products are the slides and pa-

pers (if available) presented at the meeting. Like all MORS events, it offers networking opportunities.

- Workshops include all of the educational and network focus of a mini-symposium, but, in addition, are expected to produce a product that could include improved definitions of problems, evaluations of research, and suggestions for future actions that could advance the analytical topic area. They typically start with plenary sessions that contain foundational knowledge and then break into working groups that probe specific issues in the analysis/problem area. Their products include proceedings and a brief that contain the insights and suggestions emanating from the workshop.
- A colloquium is a small conference or seminar (typically 10–75 attendees) that seeks to advance a segment of the analysis community. An example is the annual Military Operations Research Society’s Education & Professional Development Colloquium.
- Tutorials are another small event aiming to provide training. This type of special meeting includes OR practitioner courses and certified education unit (CEU) courses.

It should be noted that larger mini-symposium and workshop events may contain elements of a colloquium or

tutorial. For example, workshops often start with a half-day of tutorials that provide relative newcomers to the topic area the background they need to be active participants in the workshop.

The justification section is perhaps the most important section and the toughest to write. Recent government guidance requires an individual attending a meeting to provide a statement about why the meeting is professionally beneficial to the prospective attendee. This section should contain information that helps the potential attendee meet this requirement. The sidebar (page 15) provides justification examples developed for some recent special meetings.

### **Other MORS Events/Groups, Sponsor/Proponent Interest, and Meeting Description**

In this section of the concept paper, the author identifies other MORS







activities that could inform the topic. These include earlier special meetings, as well as related symposium working groups, composite groups, and MORS communities of practice (CoPs). The sponsor/proponent interest section contains information on potential interest by the MORS Sponsors and other potential proponents (including non-DoD organizations and industry) for the special meeting. Finally, the meeting description contains plans for the meeting, including classification and whether foreign nationals will be invited.

### Prospective Chair, Organizing Committee, Location, and Proposed Dates

The prospective chair section should contain a list of people that may be willing to lead the special meeting. The organizing committee section recommends committee members and their intended roles. A detailed

committee structure is not essential and can be accomplished after the meeting has been approved, but having an idea of who may be willing to work to make the meeting a success can help with the approval process. In the location section, a geographic area or city is recommended with rationale that includes how it will facilitate attendance by the intended participants. Finally the recommended timeframe is included in the proposed dates section. This should typically be at least six months after the submission of the proposal and may consider other related events and the availability of venues in the suggested location.

### Proposed Milestone Schedule

The proposed milestone schedule section provides key information for planning, as well as information for the MORS Board of Directors and Executive Council to consider when determining whether to approve the meeting. It is recommended that it include suggested dates for completing the following activities:

- Identifying plenary speakers and working group chairs (if needed)
- Publishing the meeting TOR (more detailed information)
- Starting the advertising campaign, including issuing an announcement and call for presentations

(ACP) (if needed)

- Completion of post-meeting products

### Concept Paper Point of Contact

The final section contains your contact information.

### Submitting Your Proposal

When the concept paper is ready, please send it to the 2014–2015 MORS special meeting Committee Chair, Ms. Deb Ray (deborah.l.ray2.civ@mail.mil) and to the MORS office (morsoffice@mors.org).

The MORS special meeting concept paper is a decision document. It should be concise but provide the essential information required by MORS leadership to confidently direct the initial planning and preparation of the TOR and make initial plans for the meeting itself.

The special meeting Committee has made the process for proposing a special meeting as simple and straightforward as possible to enable all of our members the opportunity to suggest an event that will benefit a large number of our members and advance the practice of analysis in national security.

We look forward to your ideas and to holding a special meeting that will make you a better analyst!

